

Let Us Beware of Covetousness

(Luke 12:15)

Introduction:

1. In our study of giving in worship this morning, we covered passages that teach God's people to give "as God has prospered us," "as we have purposed in our hearts," "bountifully," and "cheerfully."
2. Certain obstacles may prevent us from following these instructions.
3. This evening we are focusing our attention on one obstacle that Jesus warned His followers against in Luke 12:15 -- "*covetousness*" [greed].

Discussion:

I. LET US FIRST DEFINE "COVETOUSNESS"

A. "Covetousness" may be defined as:

1. a greedy desire for more and more of what the world has to offer
2. the love of money or possessions.

B. In Luke 12:16-19, Jesus gave an illustration of "covetousness."

C. Now that we know what "covetousness" is, we need to understand that . . .

II. THE BIBLE TEACHES CHRISTIANS TO AVOID "COVETOUSNESS"

A. According to:

1. Ephesians 5:3, "covetousness" is not to be once named among God's people
2. Colossians 3:5, "covetousness" is to be mortified
3. Hebrews 13:5, our conversation is to be without "covetousness."

B. Let us consider why these instructions are directed to Christians.

1. Anyone, including God's people, can be affected by covetousness.
 - a. For a time, Solomon got caught up in it (Ecclesiastes 2:4-11).
 - b. (Luke 12:13-14) It appears that 2 brothers had problems with it.
 - 1) One man kept what belonged to his brother.
 - 2) The other man, apparently a follower of the Lord, tried to get Jesus involved in that situation -- Jesus did not come for that purpose.
 - c. God's people are not immune to the effects of covetousness.
2. We must heed these instructions that teach us to avoid covetousness.

C. In addition to teaching us to avoid "covetousness," . . .

III. THE BIBLE TEACHES US WHY "COVETOUSNESS" MUST BE AVOIDED (Let us consider 3 reasons)

A. Reason #1: "Covetousness" will keep a person out of God's kingdom.

1. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10) Covetous people will be among those who do not inherit the kingdom of God.
 2. (Ephesians 5:5) A covetous person will have no inheritance in the Lord's kingdom.
 3. The rich young ruler shows how "covetousness" will keep a person out of God's kingdom (Luke 18:18-25).
 4. Let us not overlook what happened to the rich man in the Lord's parable as well as everyone who follows his example (Luke 12:20-21).
- B. Reason #2: "Covetousness" leads to evil.
1. (1 Timothy 6:10) "*The love of money*" is the "root" [cause] of all kinds of evil.
 - a. "Covetousness" has caused some:
 - 1) to err from the faith
 - 2) to pierce themselves through with many sorrows.
 - b. Judas Iscariot illustrates this point quite vividly (Matthew 26:14-16; 27:3-5).
 2. "Covetousness" can lead to other forms of evil that may not be as drastic.
- C. Reason #3: The Lord wants us to learn "contentment" (1 Timothy 6:6).

Conclusion:

1. "Covetousness" is a very serious matter, and we would do well to remember these principles that we have studied.
2. For a final thought, let us consider 2 questions found in Matthew 16:26.
 - a. Your soul is your most precious possession.
 - b. The welfare of your soul deserves your utmost attention.
 - c. If you lose your soul, anything you may have gained will not matter at all.
3. May God help us to be able to recognize "covetousness" and to shun it with all of our being!